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THE G-SPOT



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The G-spot does exist! Just slip your fingers into the *Guardian*, slide up and over several pages just so, and let your mind melt into the sweet, sensual pleasure of our annual guide to love, lust, and romance. What? You thought we were talking about that other G-spot? The controversial anatomical phenomenon that's inspired Good Vibrations to name a whole month after it (and celebrate with special programs and discounted G-spot toys)? Nope. We can't promise our guide will solve the mystery of that Holy Grail of the female body. But we hope our thoughts on dining, dressing up, and getting a rubdown might inspire you to do a little research of your own. And by the way, men get to play too. Who said the "G" in "G-spot" can't stand for "gender-neutral"? Now get to work.

By Molly Freedenberg
molly@sfbg.com

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Valentine's Day events

PARTIES, EVENTS, AND BENEFITS



"Eat Your Heart Out"

Supperclub, 657 Harrison; www.supperclub.com. Sun/14, 11am–3pm, \$25–\$150. All ages are welcome at this Valentine's Day brunch benefiting the Black Rock

Arts Foundation and featuring art, music, and performances.

"Hearts After Dark" Union Square; 206-4478, www.sfhgf.net. Thurs/11, 7–10pm, \$75–\$125. San Francisco General Hospital Foundation hosts an evening of cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and live entertainment with DJ Solomon and '80s cover band Tainted Love.

"Hugs 'n' Hearts" Club 8, 1151 Folsom; www.heklina.com. Sun/14, 9pm, \$10–\$25. Heklina hosts this Big Top party with special guests Amanda LePore and Cazwell.

"Love on Wheels Dating Game" Rickshaw Stop, 155 Fell; www.sfbike.org/love. Fri/12, 6pm, \$5–\$10. The San Francisco Bike Coalition plays Cupid during another round of this dating game that pairs single cyclists with each other, with the same hilarious structure as the 1970s game show.

"My Sucky Valentine" Center for Sex and Culture, 1519 Mission; www.sexandculture.org. Sun/14, 7pm, \$15–\$25. Listen to good writers talk about bad sex and tainted love, including Stephen Elliott, Daphne Gottlieb, Carol Queen, and Simon Sheppard.

"Nightlife: Romance and Reproduction" California Academy of Sciences, 55 Music Concourse Dr; 379-5128, www.calacademy.org. Thurs/11, 6pm, \$10–\$12. Learn about the animal kingdom's most amorous creatures and unique sexual behaviors while DJ Jeff

Stallings plays Balearic, African, Bedouin, and Latin beats.

"Sex and Science Wine and Dine Tour"

California Academy of Sciences, 55 Music Concourse Dr; 379-5128, www.calacademy.org. Sun/14, 6 and 7pm, \$199. Take your cues from the planet's lustiest creatures with a pre-dinner tour and champagne reception and a romantic four-course dinner with wine.

"Sweet Valentine's Cruise" Pier 431/2; 673-2900, www.redandwhite.com. Sun/14, 2pm, \$36–\$52. Join the Red and White Fleet for a romantic, fun, two-hour cruise of the San Francisco Bay, including a lavish appetizer buffet by Boudin and a complimentary beverage.

"Woo at the Zoo" San Francisco Zoo; Sloat Blvd at 47th St; 753-7236, www.sfbay.org. Sat/13, 6pm, and Sun/14, 11am and 6pm, \$70–\$75. This multimedia event explores sexual and mating behaviors of animals, conducted by Jane Tollini of the former Sex Tours, all while you enjoy champagne and either a brunch bar or a decadent dinner of beef tenderloin on herbed couscous.

FILM, MUSIC, AND PERFORMANCE

"Assuming the Ecosexual Position" The Lab, 2948 16th St; 864-8855, www.thelab.org. Sat/13, 8pm, \$7–\$10. Acclaimed performance artist and sex educator Annie Sprinkle and her partner Elizabeth Stephens explore, generate, and celebrate love through art during this special event that includes an erotic cake contest. Bring your own!

"Cora's Recipe for Love" EXIT Theatre, 156 Eddy; 673-3847, www.theexit.org. Fri-Sat, 8pm, through Feb 20. Sean Owens' wacky alter ego returns to address love and longing through the eyes of Gas and Gulp regulars.

"Hearts on Fire!" Teatro Zinzanni, Pier 29;

438-2668, www.zinzanni.org. Sun/14, 12 and 5:30pm, \$91–\$145. Teatro Zinzanni presents two special performances of this joyful love affair featuring disco diva Thelma Houston and Christine Deaver. Show also runs through May 16.

"How We First Met" Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness; 392-4400, www.howwefirstmet.com. Sat/13 and Sun/14, 8pm, \$25–\$40. Real audience stories are spun into a comedy masterpiece in this one-of-a-kind hit show, now in its 10th year.

"Justin Bond: Close to You" Castro Theatre, 429 Castro; 863-0611, www.thecastrotheatre.com. Sun/14, 8:15pm, \$35–\$75. Accompanied by a lush 10-piece orchestra, the Tony nominee recreates sweet sounds from your favorite Carpenters hits. The evening also features the Thrillpeddlers as special guests.

"Love Everywhere" San Francisco City Hall Rotunda and Glide Memorial Church, www.erikachongshuch.org. Fri/12 (City Hall), 12pm; Sun/14 (Glide), 9 and 11am, free. The Erika Chong Shuch Performance Project debuts a new, large-scale work presented free as part of Dancers' Group's ONSITE series.

"MediaARTS 2010: Algo-rhythms of heart/break/beats" Ninth Street Independent Film Center, 145 Ninth St; www.mediaarts2010.com. Fri/12, 7pm, \$10–\$20. Ninth Street Independent Film Center presents an exhibition of the intersection of emerging technology, performance, and the moving image attempting to compute what it means to love and lose.

"Mortified: Doomed Valentine's Show" Make-Out Room, 3225 22nd St.; www.makeoutroom.com. Thurs/11 and Fri/12, 8pm, \$12–\$15. Share the pain, awkwardness, and bad poetry associated with love as performers read from their teen angst artifacts.

"On the Periphery of Love: A Solo Performance Festival with Valentine's Day Implications" StageWerx Theatre, 533 Sutter. Fri/12 and Sat/13, 8pm; Sun/14, 7pm, \$15–\$30. StageWerx presents five new visions of



Rapper Cazwell and singer Amanda LePore spread the love at Club Eight's Hugs 'n' Hearts on Valentine's night.

romance, featuring work by Martha Rynberg, Thao P. Nguyen, Zahra Noorbaksh, Bruce Pachtman, and Paolo Sambrano.

"Rock & Roll Theatresports: Be My Valentine" Bayfront Theater, Fort Mason Center; 474-6776, www.improv.org. Fri/12 and Sat/13, 8pm, \$17. BATS presents two days of shows featuring scenes and songs dedicated to love and relationships, during which six rock-themed teams will compete for points and audience accolades.

"Strange Love" Actors Theatre, 855 Bush; 345-1287, www.natashamuse.com. Sun/14, 6:30pm, \$10. The Valentine's Day edition of

"A Funny Night for Comedy" features Will Franken, Wegent and Page, and host Natasha Muse.

CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

"Love Dub" Yoga Tree Castro, 97 Collingwood; 701-YOGA, www.yogatreesf.com. Sat/13, 8:30pm–12:30am, \$45. Yoga Tree and Upmost High Records present a hatha flow yoga class and live reggae concert, with a portion of proceeds to benefit Save the Redwood Tree Foundation, Surfriders, and Power to the Peaceful. **SFBG**



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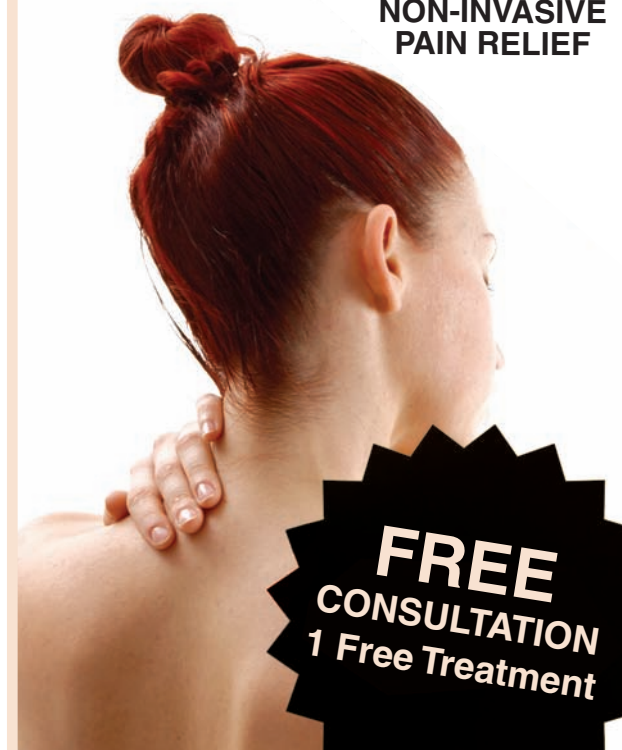
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In honor of the romantic holiday, Bella Trattoria will encourage patrons to feed each other as they enjoy a prix fixe menu. | GUARDIAN PHOTO BY CHARLES RUSSO

Full of love

Getting your Valentine's Day grub on

By Robyn Johnson
 > culture@sfbg.com

THE G-SPOT Despite what you might hear from Dean Martin, it's not an empirical fact that everyone loves somebody sometime. It has, however, been proven that everyone needs to eat.

For the people that fit both categories, here's a list of dining opportunities and options for the upcoming grand romantic holiday — organized from expensive (or \$\$\$\$ in Yelp speak) to recession-conscious.

► JARDINIÈRE

A go-to place for the symphony and opera set, Jardinière talks the talk and walks the walk, serving some of the most highly regarded French-American food in the Bay. The Valentine's menu offers up tasty bits like duck breast with lentils and candied kumquats, frozen lemon soufflé with rose petals and milk chocolate sauce, and a whole host of delectables that guarantee to assuage any doubts about parting company with a few Benjamins. 300 Grove, SF. (415) 861-5555, www.jardiniere.com. \$125 prix fixe

► SUPPERCLUB

In my mind, dining at Supperclub must be like *Eyes Wide Shut* meets that Eurotrash club I drunkenly walked into while hostelling in Prague meets François Mitterrand's last meal. In other words, an absolutely decadent place. The Valentine's menu and entertainment is a surprise, but management promises an experience not for the "light of heart," as illustrated by the photo on the Web site of two dudes in collars making kissies with a sternly sexy-faced woman. 657 Harrison, SF. (415) 348-0900, www.supperclub.com. \$100 prix fixe

► FIRST CRUSH

Cozy ambience and an expansive California wine selection has made First Crush a date-spot favorite. On the five-course Valentine's menu, you'll find pistachio-crusting wild Hawaiian walu accompanied by goat cheese fondue and globe artichokes braised in barigoule. (In case you're wondering, walu is a fish similar to white tuna, known for its buttery flavor. Barigoule? According to *Larousse Gastronomique*, it's a fancy method of cooking stuffed and braised artichokes, usually involving pork.) Yum. 101 Cyril Magnin, SF. (415) 982-7874, www.firstcrush.com. \$89 prix fixe

► BELLA TRATTORIA

According to the Bella Trattoria calendar blog, the Valentine's meal will be a family-style affair during which the "waitstaff will be insistent that you feed each other." Luckily, you can look forward to airplaning with their much-loved and infallible gnocchi, to speak nothing of other highlights such as grilled hanger steak fillet with Sangiovese bone-marrow glaze and mango. When planning your dinner here, keep in mind that the pricing's a bit tricky: From 5 to 6 p.m., the prix fixe menu consists of three courses and costs \$45; from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., it's up to five courses and \$70; and from 10 to 11 p.m., it's back down to three courses and \$50. 3854 Geary, SF. (415) 221-0305, www.bellatrattoriasf.com. \$45-\$70 prix fixe

► L'ARDOISE BISTRO

Why do we love this tiny Duboce Triangle restaurant so? Might be the red walls, the simple and classic French cuisine, or the neighborhood quaintness. Or that dining here feels like being at a dinner party in Amelie's living room. Perhaps it's simply the rich and savory coq au vin or the tiger prawn raviole, both the height of patron adoration, along with the

chocolate banana bread pudding. Or maybe it's that no single dish is more than \$20. Parisian romance on a recession budget? Awesome. 151 Noe, SF. (415) 437-2600, www.lardoisesf.com. \$15-\$30

► FLORA

At Flora, you could choose your meal by throwing darts at a menu pinned to the wall and still have one of the best dining experiences of your life. This Oakland hotspot, which serves up fancified American cuisine and art deco elegance, changes its menu frequently. The orgasmic caramel pudding topped with sea salt, however, seems to stick around and would make a fantastic choice to top a sexy Valentine's meal. An added bonus: if you get tired of looking at your date, check out the charming old-timey decor and adorably suspended waitstaff and bartenders. 1900 Telegraph, Oakl. (510) 286-0100, www.floraoakland.com. \$15-\$30

► HIBISCUS

Serving up innovative Caribbean fare, newcomer Hibiscus is already creating a buzz in foodieland with its casual yet chic atmosphere, friendly service, accessible prices, and on-point cuisine. Expect to be blown away by the crispy plantains with garlic oil, refreshing cocktails with homemade syrups, pepperpot stew, fried chicken, and pretty much everything else on the menu. 1745 San Pablo, Oakl. (510) 444-2626, www.hibiscusoakland.com. \$15-\$25

► PAGOLAC

With its shabby pink awning and Tenderloin location, Pagolac ostensibly maintains a total lack of affectation. But much like Dr. Parnassus' Imaginarium, once you step through the threshold, you enter a radically different world. Well, sort of. The interior is still modest, but the sparseness creates an elegant minimalism that highlights the authentic homey Vietnamese food. The signature dish is the seven-course beef, but cheaper options, like the make-it-yourself wraps, are just as fun. 655 Larkin, SF. (415) 776-3234, \$10-\$20

► VENUS

I've never eaten here for lunch or dinner because the brunch is just that good — among the best of the East Bay. Mainstays are the light and nutmeggy challah bread French toast, the lemon ricotta hotcakes, and the banana Nantucket

flapjacks, but you really can't go wrong with any of the menu choices. The coffee drinks are also phenomenal, especially the mocha with Chantilly whipped cream. 2327 Shattuck, Berk. (510) 540-5950, www.venusrestaurant.net. \$10-\$15

► STREET FOOD CARTS

If you're looking to get more bang for your buck (and yes, I just made a tasteless semi-ironic pun), then take your sweetie out on the town for a street food adventure. From crème brûlée to adobo to empanadas, it's out there waiting for you like some big edible treasure hunt. You can follow the vendors by their Twitter accounts. www.sfcartproject.com/sfstreetfood. \$5-\$10

► BITTERSWEET CHOCOLATE CAFÉ

For a simpler Valentine's Day excursion, skip straight to dessert and have a hot chocolate at Bittersweet. Personally, I'm convinced that the Spicy!, with its pepperiness and delicate note of rose, is direct evidence that there is a God and that s/he is kind and benevolent. 2123 Fillmore, SF. (415) 346-8715; 5427 College, Oakl. (510) 654-7159; 730 Camino Ramon, Suite 120, Danville. (925) 837-9900, www.bittersweetcafe.com. \$5

► TARTINE BAKERY

Another option for the truly cash-strapped: grab a morning bun or croissant and enjoy the living theater of Dolores Park. 600 Guerrero, SF. (415) 487-2600, www.tartinebakery.com. \$5

► FLOOR PICNIC

On what is a blatantly consumerist holiday, dining options can seem pretty bleak for the frugal and broke among us. Chances are if you're far on the margins, you probably don't give much of a crap anyway. But for those who remain sentimental, have an indoor picnic. All you need is some candles, Yann Tiersen, bread, cheese, and Two-Buck Chuck. Also, on certain days Rainbow Grocery, bakeries, Safeway, and Trader Joe's have bountiful leftovers for freegan perusal. Your living room, sf.wikispot.org/dumpster_diving. \$0+ **SFBG**

What are your favorite places for romantic dining? E-mail culture@sfbg.com and tell us in 200 words or fewer about your favorite foodie date spot. We'll post our favorites on our Pixel Vision blog at www.sfbg.com.



Flowers are nice, but French-inspired vintage lingerie is even better.

PHOTO BY MICHELLE ATHANASIADES, DOLLHOUSE BETTIE

Lusty lingerie

Taking the saintliness out of Valentine's Day

By Chhavi Nanda
 > culture@sfbg.com

THE G-SPOT Legend has it that the feast of Saint Valentine might be based on myth — simply a Catholic invention meant to take the place of Lupercalia, a pagan holiday celebrating fertility. Chaste saint helping Christians marry? Or half-naked forest people drinking wine and wearing goat-skins? We'll take the half-naked forest people. But since goat skins are so hard to come by these days, we've decided to honor our pagan past in a contemporary way, with an ode to lingerie, the unofficial uniform of modern heretics. The saints can keep their flannel pajamas and cotton nightgowns. We prefer the garters, thongs, bustiers, and bootie shorts in the city's best temples of temptation.

▶ DOLLHOUSE BETTIE

There's a good reason Dollhouse Bettie is a perennial favorite for those who love what goes under clothes: the vintage and vintage-inspired offerings are beautiful, flattering, and reasonably priced. Fans of the '50s will love the **New Old Stock Exquisite Form** (\$89), a strapless corset with soft white cotton peaked bra cups, expanding spiral steel boning, and intricate details like lace mesh and satin ribbons. Looking for a full ensemble? Add an all-lace wrap (\$127.50) with long, flowing sleeves and flowery embroidery, perfect for a dramatic unveiling or for slightly more cover during your postcoital cigarette. 1641 Haight, SF. (415) 252-7399, www.dollhousebettie.com

▶ FELICITY'S FETICHE

If your style is a bit more black leather than white lace, you'll love

Felicity's Fetiche, a delightful boutique branded as "apparel for the uninhibited" and geared toward professional dancers. This is where you'll find costumes, bright-colored fishnets, sexy tank tops, and even affordable leather items like the **OverBust Busk-Front Leather Corset** (\$22), many of which come in plus sizes. 1214 Sutter, SF. (415) 474-7874, www.felicitysfetich.com

▶ ARICIE LINGERIE

Don't be deterred by the fact that Aricie Lingerie is in a mall. This local shop's selection of European items can't be beat. One of our favorites is the **Sublime Silk Chemise** (\$299), a sexy, sophisticated take on the little white dress by Lise Charmel, one of France's premier lingerie houses. Sure, it isn't cheap, but neither are you. 50 Post, SF. (415) 989-0261, www.ariciesf.com

▶ INJEANIOUS LOUNGE

Of course, sexy undergarments aren't just for the ladies. You can find everything sultry and silly — from break-aways to short shorts, from comic-book undies to banana sacks — at the Castro's Injeanious Lounge. We especially like the offerings from **Ginch Gonch** (\$20–\$30), a line of "youthful underwear with an adult flare" (think hearts, trucks, or jungle themes). 432 Castro, SF. (415) 861-3963, www.injeanious.com

▶ ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR

Another good bet for the boys is the signature **Bandito** (\$5) from Artificial Flavor, a comfortable, form-fitting brief that comes in rich, vibrant colors with complementary color piping. The Cole Valley shop sells clothing too, just in case you want to carry your style from the bedroom to brunch. 912 Cole #208, SF. (800) 961-6705, www.aflavor.com

▶ AGENT PROVOCATEUR

And finally, if you're hell-bent on shopping at a store that's not locally owned, we'd have to recommend U.K.-based Agent Provocateur, owned by Vivienne Westwood's son. We can't help but salivate over the **Love Cream Love Garter** (\$50), a delicate lace piece with cream embroidery and silk ribbon detail. Or, for darker moments (in our millionaire dreams), we'll take the **Telescopic Whip** (\$590), a retractable accessory with a snap and wrist-hold made from metal and available in either black or red. BDSM on the go? Yes, please. 54 Geary, SF. (415) 421-0229, www.agentprovocateur.com **SFBG**

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It's the perfect time to visit a spa or bodywork center like Cocoon (pictured) or one of our other suggested spots, many of which have Valentine's Day specials for individuals and couples.

GUARDIAN PHOTO BY ARLENE ROMANA

Good vibes

Giving the gift of bodywork for individuals and couples

By Molly Freedenberg
> molly@sfbg.com

THE G-SPOT Many people consider massage a luxury, a kind of pampering or relaxation that is lovely but unnecessary. But done right,

massage — or any kind of bodywork — is actually an integral part of overall well-being. A powerful tool to balance the body physically, mentally, and spiritually, bodywork is an act of self-love. And what better time to express love of any kind than Valentine's Day? Whether you want to honor yourself, your partner, or your coupledness, now is the perfect moment to tend to your somatic needs. Below are three of our favorite spots for personal treatments, gift certificates, and couples' treatments. Each place is focused on holistic health and all are refreshingly between the extremes of new age woo-woo hippie-dom and pretentious L.A. spa culture.

► EARTHBODY

This intimate Hayes Valley spot is more healing center than mere day spa. Therapists are trained in several modalities and develop custom ses-

sions for every client, including consultations before *and* after treatment. It's also worth noting that Earthbody is uniquely committed to sustainability, using only organic materials (including fair-trade cotton sheets), plant-derived ingredients in balms and oils that are made in-house, and eco-safe cleaning products.

Individuals: No matter what you choose for yourself or for a loved one, you can't go wrong. Those with chronic pain might try a body centering treatment (\$95–\$155), while those looking for a bit more pampering might like a classic facial (\$75–\$165). Not sure what you want? Let the therapist figure it out in a basic bodywork session, starting at \$65 for 30 minutes, then find out what your bodyworker learned about you while you snack on almonds, fruits, tea, and specially filtered Kangen water.

Couples: Many couples' massages are merely two individual massages happening in the same room. Not so at Earthbody. Meant to honor the special union between two people — whether they are lovers, friends, or family — these treatments feature two therapists performing a special synchronized choreography. "When people have a commitment to each other, they

have an energy that radiates with another field," says founder Denmo Ibrahim. "Each body is being addressed, but the field also is being addressed." Treatments start at \$225 per couple for 60 minutes and go up to \$490 for the two-and-a-half-hour Lotus treatment. 534 Laguna, SF. (415) 552-7000, www.earthbody.net

► THERAPEIA

Fans of contemporary design will drool over this gorgeous, 10,000-square-foot oasis, where walls are bedecked with art and mirrors and lounges look like sets for a photo shoot in *Dwell*. The nine-year-old center specializes in personalized, customized service, keeping charts on every client that include therapist notes after every session. An added bonus for Valentine's Day: mention this article and get 14 percent (Get it?) off any service, along with a free soy-based candle.

Individual: Give yourself or your loved one the center's specialty treatment, a 90-minute hot stone massage (\$165). Unlike similar treatments at other places, bodyworkers at Therapeia actually use the heated stones as tools for massage, rather than simply placing them on the body. "The stones

have such a smooth, even, wide surface area, it's like two massages in one," says studio coordinator Jacquelyn Moore. For something even more special, add the gift of ongoing self-care with a membership. For \$49 a year, members get access to featured specials, including 20 percent off every treatment, 10 percent off products, and 40 percent off treatments during their birthday week. Anyone planning to visit more than three times a year will save money.

Couples: Special, larger rooms are reserved for couples' treatments (\$295–\$385), which feature two therapists working on each person individually. "People enjoy relaxing in same room as a partner," Moore says. If you'd like to share your space with four or more people, you can all enjoy your massage in a special lounge outfitted with a fireplace, fountains, and luxurious leather couches.

1801 Bush (lower level), SF. (415) 885-4450, www.therapeiamassage.com

► SUCHADA

Exotic, elegant, and decadent, this locally-owned business specializes in traditional Thai massage. Not only are the treatments fantastic, but the new Embarcadero location is beautiful, accented with imported Thai furniture and fabrics, recycled wood, and floating flowers in a tinkling fountain. Bonus? If you book a treatment at the King Street location, you can get 10 percent off a meal at nearby Grand Pu Bah.

Individuals: A first-timer's best bet is a one-hour traditional Thai massage (\$60). You'll slip on light, pajama-like garments and lie on a cushioned mat in a curtained room while your therapist — trained in Thailand as well as certified here — uses hands, elbows, and knees to knead, stretch, and press out your kinks. Both relaxing and active, many people call this modality a cross between a massage and a workout.

Couples: Book two massages together and you can receive tandem treatments, or spoil yourselves with the three-hour Royal Lanna or Royal Siam massage, both centuries-old combinations of traditional Thai bodywork, reflexology, and herbal massage. Finish with delicious homemade lemongrass tea and, a special for Valentine's Day, chocolate.

38 Bryant, SF. (415) 644-0808
690 King, SF. (415) 252-5020
www.suchadathaimassage.com **SFBG**

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